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The Church of the Brethren (Dunkers)

IN LEBANON COUNTY

PAPER READ BEFORE THE
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BY
REV. J. G. FRANCIS, A. B., B. D.

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Michael Zug Homestead (Remodeled), 138 Cumberland St., Birthplace and Early Home of First Church
of Brethren of Lebanon

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Church of the Brethren

IN LEBANON COUNTY

By REV. J. G. FRANCIS, A.B., B.D.

The Church of the Brethren was organized in Schwarzenau, Germany, 1708. Eight persons covenanted together to restore primitive Christianity in its purity and entirety. Alexander Mack was the leader and preacher of the little band. They found from early church history and from the New Testament that Christ and the Apostles used a threefold immersion forward in water as the initiatory rite into the Church. It must be preceded by faith in Christ as the Son of God, the sacrifice for sin, and by repentance for sin, and was unto the remission of sin. It was accompanied by an inner work of grace, a new birth. They believed that the Holy Spirit was given in connection with water baptism, and not apart from it, Christ, our example, receiving the Spirit after his immersion in the Jordan. They believed that Christ commanded, John 13, that feetwashing be observed as an ordinance, in connection with a full supper, pointing forward to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, not the Jewish Passover, to be followed by the bread and wine, memorials of the broken body and shed blood of Christ. They believed in observing the ordinances in the manner in which they were delivered and "at their true value". They insisted on full obedience to the commands of Jesus, not as a means of justification, but in order to abide in His love. They did not war on the truths brought out by Luther, but insisted that he did not go far enough. They refused to crystallize in a creed, taking the New Testament as their creed, and depending upon the Holy Spirit to lead into all truth. Direct access to the Word without

the intervention of a creed, the Sunday School method as over against catechization, was their way. Luther was Pauline; Mack, Johannine (referring to John the Apostle, not John the Baptist),—the embodiment of Brethrenism.

The little church was fruitful and multiplied, and was persecuted by the state churches of Germany. They left the Fatherland. The first colony came to America in 1719, with Peter Becker as preacher, and settled at Germantown. A larger body came with Alexander Mack in 1729. The whole church came to America, being unique in this; and has been most American ever since. They first printed God's word in the New World. The first Brethren Church was organized in America at Germantown, on Christmas Day, 1723. In the fall of 1724, these Germantown Brethren took a missionary tour into what was then known as the Conestoga region, five years before Lancaster county was formed. They organized a church at Coventry, across from Pottstown, then came on up farther into the wilderness and organized the Conestoga Church. Elder G. N. Falkenstein, in his history of the Brethren for the Pennsylvania German Historical Society, says of this effort that it was the most remarkable missionary tour in all Pennsylvania colonial history. In the Conestoga organization was Conrad Beissel, who became its first preacher. He lived on the Muehlbach (Millbach) claimed by many as the Millbach creek which flows into the Tulpehocken. If this view is correct, the Brethren may lay claim to the first church organization in what is now Lebanon county, three years older than the oldest Lutheran church. Beissel, however, in 1735 withdrew to the place now known as Ephrata, Lancaster county, and was followed by all his adherents.

A few words to show the relation of the Brethren to our great national questions: From the beginning the Brethren were against slavery. Elder Christopher Sower



Lower Meeting House (Beecham) between Westview II and Rockland. The Stone part the Oldest Special Meeting house of the Beecham in the County.

said he trembled for our country when God would reckon with us for this evil. One hundred years later we were plunged into the Civil War. Lincoln was in touch with a Brethren preacher in youth and in the White House; the Emancipation Proclamation is certainly an expression of Brethren life. The Brethren set themselves against alcohol as a beverage almost at the beginning of our national life, and have been to it a consuming fire ever since. Opposition to secret societies has in these days resulted in the life of openness; invisible government must go. The Brethren have always insisted that the sister wear a prayer-covering, it placing her on an equality with man. The position could only result in giving woman the ballot. These facts are sufficient to show that the Brethren are no blind leaders of the blind.

The first permanent settlement of Brethren within the limits of our present county was likely in the north-eastern section, constituting the western part of what is now

The Little Swatara Congregation

In 1750 Eld. George Klein, ancestor of the late Dr. W. F. Klein, of Lebanon, moved to Northkill, Berks county, and labored in the Little Swatara region. Soon after, near the present town of Millersburg, he baptized George Beshner (Bashore), Michael Frantz, Peter Heckman, John Frantz, and others.

The Little Swatara Church grew and grew westward, and by 1770 had crossed the present line between Lebanon and Berks counties. By this time Peter Heckman had been called to the ministry to assist George Klein, the elder in charge; and the membership had grown to forty-five baptized members, as follows: Peter Heckman, minister, and wife, John Heckman and wife, Michael Frantz and wife, Nicholas Gerst and wife, Jacob Moyer

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and wife, George Beasher, David Marge (Merkey) and wife, Simon Merrich and wife, John Frantz and wife, Christian Frantz and wife, Rose Schnables, Jacob Smith and wife, Eliza Kentzel, Adam Henrich, Mrs. Cryder, Philip Zeigler and wife, Jacob Breneisen and wife, David Kleins, Widow Elizabeth Benedict, Sophy Kish, Leonard Sebalt and wife, John Grove, Jacob Baker and wife, Jacob Deal and wife, Hans Stohner and wife, Jacob Beasher and wife.

The names are given because we have here the ancestors of many Lebanon countians. The Frantzes, Moyers, Bashores, Merkeys, Zeiglers and Kleins became very strong Brethren families.

The Jacob Moyer before mentioned is likely the Jacob Moyer who bought from the Penns, 100 acres of land in Bethel township, now Lebanon county, on Feb. 28, 1742; and 160 acres, on Oct. 14, 1747. He is likely the Jacob Moyer who is designated a non-associator in Bethel township, in the assessment.

Peter Heckman soon after 1770 was ordained to the eldership, and likely then received the oversight of the congregation. Aug. 12, 1780, Michael Frantz, mentioned in the list, was ordained an elder by Eld. Christopher Sower, of Germantown, and Eld. Martin Urner, of Coventry; and on the same occasion Jacob Moyer and (Hans) George Beasher were ordained deacons. David Klein, mentioned in the list, and son of Eld. George, was afterward called to the ministry.

Eld. Michael Frantz doubtless cared for the church till the ordination of Eld. Hans Jacob Beashor, son of Hans George, the deacon, who had emigrated to America prior to 1738, and had settled a few miles northwest of Millersburg, in Berks county. Eld. Hans Jacob seems to have been an elder of prominence, for he was one of the

elders to sign the General Conference or Annual Meeting minutes in 1790 and 1814. Hans George, born Feb. 8, 1775, the son of Eld. Hans Jacob, is claimed by his descendant; Dr. Bashore, of Palmyra, also to have been an elder. Hans George married Christine Fackler, of the Big Swatara congregation, and in 1811 moved to near Hoernerstown, Dauphin county, within the bounds of the Big Swatara congregation. Hans Jacob was still living at the time of removal of Hans George, so it is unlikely that the latter ever had the oversight of the Little Swatara congregation. Hans Jacob may have been living till after the ordination of Elder Abraham Zug, of Richland (1823), and a member of the old Conestoga congregation of Lancaster county, he having moved into Lebanon county in 1813, the year of our county's birth. At any rate, Abr. Zug was called to take the oversight of the Little Swatara church.

Elder Abraham Zug died in 1841, and after this event Jacob Wenger and Joseph Merkey, on the same day, were ordained. Merkey (Nov. 28, 1782-March 12, 1869), a small man and weak physically, of good thought but few words, was twenty years older than Wenger. Wenger (Mar. 10, 1801-Jan. 6, 1881) was a large man, of commanding appearance, pleasant approach, and a powerful speaker. He was a son of Christian Wenger, of the Wenger family, a short distance east of Jonestown. Jacob's home was early a meeting place of the Brethren. He threw himself into the work, and the Little Swatara church grew greatly. He was married to Lydia Frantz, who died in 1853. About a year after her death, this splendid worker fell into sin, which at first he confessed but afterward denied, thus closing the door against his re-admission into the Brethren Church. His fall was a terrible blow to the congregation, and perhaps injured it almost as much as his labors had done it good. Writes Eld.

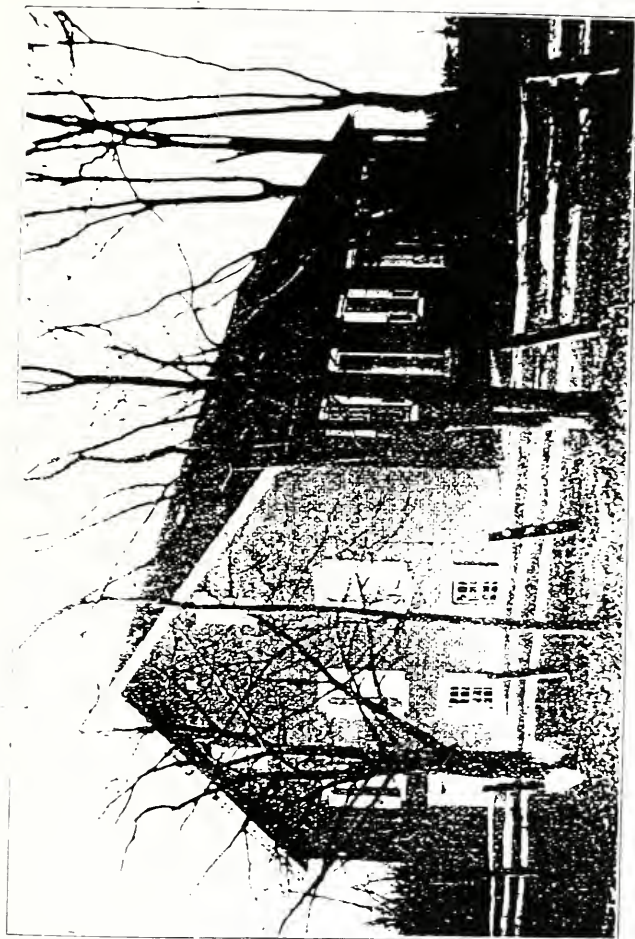


1. Moyer Homestead, Moyer's Meeting-house. 2. Eld. Jacob Moyer Homestead near Fredericksburg. 3. Eld. Jacob Wenger Homestead south of Jonestown. 4. John Gable (Light) Homestead on Fredericksburg Road. 5. Light's Meeting-house, on 4, now removed to Rankstown.

Bethel township; at Kutztown, north of Myerstown, and at Mt. Nebo. We must refer you to the History of the Brethren in Eastern Pa. for an adequate account of the Union House, pp. 450-454. For two years meetings have again been held at Mt. Nebo, where Brethren had preached fifty years ago. The services at the Lebanon county places are as follows: Moyer's, every six weeks; Light's, every six weeks; Fredericksburg, every three weeks; Rankstown, every three weeks; Union House, every three weeks; and at Mt. Nebo, every six weeks.

There are two Sunday Schools of the congregation in our county. The one in the Union House, Samuel Meyer, superintendent, has an enrollment of about 60. The other is at Rankstown, three miles west of Lickdale, enrollment about 45, Samuel Wenger, superintendent.

The meeting-houses came gradually, preaching being continued in some of the homes long after the first meeting-house was erected. Thus in the Tulpehocken congregation, the Royer house was built in 1840 and the Millbach in 1850; but preaching continued in the home of John Gible and of others till 1867, when the Heidelberg house was built. Being a plain people, the Brethren built plain meeting houses. The first houses were stone; a decade later, in the fifties, they began to use brick. The first houses also were comparatively small; the only thought was a plain room in which to have preaching, the sexes not commingling. The love-feasts—the big gatherings—were still held in the barns. But the idea of a love-feast house gradually came. The houses were enlarged, a basement placed under the whole, with facilities for cooking, and long tables to feed the multitudes. The large loft was floored, divided into two parts, supplied with the old-time rope beds, the one side for the brethren, the other for the sisters. Each congregation has at least one love-feast house, some have two or three, along with



Moyer's Maritime Hotel, New Greble

1907

houses simply for preaching. But the Sunday School and different societies within the church are gradually evolving houses suited for these purposes; and in towns and cities the idea of feeding the multitudes, which Christ did only in desert places, is giving way to methods in keeping with city life.

As the Brethren have congregational lines, we shall now define within Lebanon county the bounds of Little Swatara. Coming out from Berks county, the northern line is the Blue Mountain to Indiantown Gap, thence south along the road to Harper's, thence east along Swatara creek to a point opposite Bunker Hill station, thence across Black Oak Hill to the Gravel Hill road, thence along said road to where 16th St. runs into it, thence along said street to within one mile of the Reading and Harrisburg pike, thence following a line east one mile north of said pike and parallel to it into Berks county.

Now let us turn our attention to the Brethren who came in from the south. These intermingled at love-feasts, intermarried, visited and exchanged ideas more or less with those who came in from the northeast; and they met together at Annual Meetings. So their customs were identical, and what has been said of the Little Swatara brethren will apply to those from the south, and in great measure to the Brethren throughout the country.

The Old Conestoga Church

We have seen that the Conestoga church was organized by the fourteen missionaries who came up into the Conestoga region in 1724, at Millbach in our county, say some; others, that it was in Leacock township, Lancaster county. Conrad Beissel was the first preacher. He absorbed many erroneous fancies, and differed with some of the Brethren on points where he may have been correct. He began to observe for rest the seventh day in-

stead of the first, and taught that marriage defiled man at least to the extent of unfitting him to be a teacher of the Word. He was very egotistic; on one occasion he felt the weight of the sins of the whole world resting upon him. He was, however, a man of extraordinary gifts, and had the Brethren been able to work with him, he would have been a great blessing to them. As it was, in 1734 the Conestoga Church was re-organized with Michael Frantz as elder, and with Beissel setting up for himself at Ephrata.

The Conestoga Church spread westward into the White Oak land, thence to Conewago creek and up into what is now Dauphin county. This territory was early divided into three congregations—Conestoga, White Oak and East Conewago or Big (Great) Swatara. Morgan Edwards tells us that Great Swatara, younger than White Oak, dates from 1756; but Elder Samuel R. Zug quotes from an old record: "So they, in 1772, divided in three districts, with Peter Eichelberger and Jacob Stoll, ministers in Conestoga; C. Longenecker and Hannas Zug, in White Oak; and John Jacob Boshor and George Kline in Swatara." There is evidently an error here, for we have already seen that the last two ministers belonged to Little Swatara church, which originated in Northkill, Berks county, and spread westward. There were two Swatara congregations—Little Swatara and Big Swatara. Elder Zug's source should have given the facts concerning Big Swatara, as that is the congregation which was a branch of old Conestoga, and its ministers were George Miller and Adam Hammaker.

From these three mother congregations on the south and west—Conestoga, White Oak and Big Swatara—Lebanon county has been largely supplied with Brethren. The line between Conestoga and White Oak was the Lititz pike, running on north to Brickerville. As the

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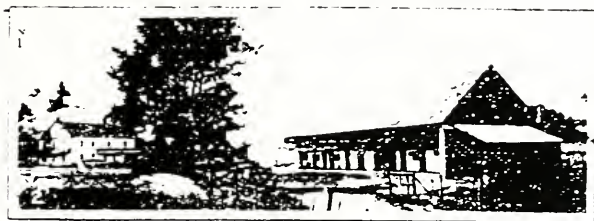
Brethren moved over South Mountain this line was extended straight on up into Lebanon county till it met Little Swatara to the north. The line between White Oak and Big Swatara comes over the mountain near Mt. Gretna, till it strikes the Colebrook road, which it follows till it is intersected by a continuation of 16th St., Lebanon. It now follows this 16th St. line to the southwest corner of Little Swatara, which from here to the Blue Mountain is the eastern boundary of Big Swatara. The northwestern part of our county, however, is practically unoccupied by Brethren. So at an early day Brethren Lebanon county was divided up among themselves by four outside congregations—Little Swatara taking the northeastern part, Conestoga the southeastern, White Oak the central southern, and Big Swatara the entire western part.

We have already considered the Little Swatara congregation in Lebanon county. We shall now turn to the southeastern section:

The Conestoga Church in Lebanon County

There is one name that stands out big in this section; it is the name ROYER, one of the strong families of the Brethren Church, a Huguenot family driven by religious persecution to the Palatinatē, Germany, a family represented in French nobility, one branch apparently connected with royalty.

When, in April, 1813, Abraham Zug, son of Elder John of White Oak, moved to the outskirts of Richland, there were three other Brethren families in this Conestoga corner—John Royer, of Millbāch, and Jacob and Samuel Royer where Royer's meeting-house now stands, all brothers, to whom Abraham Zug's wife was a sister. In 1814, Abraham Zug and Jacob Pfautz, of Middle Creek, Lancaster county, were elected to the ministry, and in 1823 both were ordained to the eldership. Middle Creek



1. Daniel Rorer Homestead east of Richland. 2. Jacob Rorer (Hertzler) Homestead at Rorer Morningside. 3. Samuel Rorer Homestead adjoining 2. 4. Eld. Abr. Zug (Smaltz) Homestead, Richland. 5. Ezra Rorer Homestead near Reistville.

was a Brethren stronghold, a Brethren school being there at an early day. The Pfautzes, Bollingers and others from Middle Creek followed the Royers and settled about them.

Abraham Zug was a very able preacher, reputed more able than Rev. Leinbach, east of Myerstown. It is related that one of Leinbach's members once asked him how it was that an ignorant man like Abraham Zug could beat him preaching. The man received in reply: "Indeed, Abraham is not an ignorant man. He knows his Bible." It is said that he had a practice of filling a basket with bibles, which he carried around and distributed in the homes of the poor. Beside being elder of the Conestoga Church, we have seen that he also had the oversight of Little Swatara. He died in 1841. He no doubt began preaching, soon after his election to the ministry in 1814, in his own home, and also in the homes of his brothers-in-law, John, Jacob, and Samuel Royer.

In 1840, Jacob Royer gave ground for what is now known as Royer meeting-house. His brother Samuel gave the ground for part of the cemetery. Not only were these old Brethren interested in religion, but in education as well. They came over from Middle Creek, Lancaster county, where, as already stated, the Brethren early maintained a school. The basement of the Royer meeting-house was erected for a school room. The property was transferred to Jacob Bollinger, "Trustee of the German Baptists, who call themselves Old Brothers Society Meeting-house, and the lands and burying grounds belonging thereto, and Abraham Zug, Jr., and Jacob F. Diener of the same place, Trustees of the School department to be established in the above named Meeting-house, and the School room, wherein the school is to be held." The Building Committee was: Daniel Zug, Johan Weber (Weaver), and Jacob Royer.

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In 1841, after the death of Eld. Abraham Zug, the adjoining elders advised the organization of a separate church in the eastern part of the Lebanon Valley, to be known as the Tulpehocken circuit. The Conestoga and Little Swatara members agreed. Abraham Zug, elder of both churches, had likely brought them to this mind. On Oct. 5, 1841, the organization was effected. John Zug, son of Eld. Abraham, was called to the ministry, and Daniel Royer and Jacob Oberholtzer were elected deacons. Thirty-five votes were cast. Elder Daniel Bollinger, who lived along the pike a short distance east of Halfway, likely had the oversight of the new congregation.

The members in the central southern part of the county belonging to the White Oak circuit, however, did not fall in with this new organization at once. Let us look at

White Oak Beginnings in Lebanon County

John Geib (1767-1826) may have been the first member in the section north of Rexmont. He resided on the farm now owned by Cyrus Smith, about one mile north of the Cornwall meeting-house. John was a son of John Geib of White Oak, son of Conrad (1694-1762), the immigrant. John Geib, Jr., was a resident of Lebanon township, then Dauphin, now Lebanon county, already in 1792, on May 28 of which year he bought of Jacob Hershey, for £774, 173 acres of land. On Apr. 30, 1803, he again bought of Hershey, the purchase being 183 A., 67 P., a property doubtless joining the first property. Jacob Hershey lived in Warwick township, Lancaster county, and was likely the Jacob Hershey who, with his wife, was baptized by the Brethren May 15, 1768. Hershey, without doubt, was the father-in-law of Geib, as the latter's wife had been Barbara Hershey. The farms bought by Geib had originally belonged to Jacob Meyer, who bought them from the Penns Feb. 2, 1749. The Meyer

Ober's Schulhaus (Abraham Wagner) Daniel Biddel. Abi Hermer. Isaac Gschelman. Henry Reyer Dffen. Mount Pleasant Philip Rieger Diers Jacob Bucher John Eroman. Samuel Giddel. Dffen (Georg Giddel) Henry Giddel. John Rinf-	Bidder Herichim Henry Herr. alt Sem Griebel Daniel Griebel. Mount Pleasant. John Zug Christian Lauffman. Jacob Gieb. Bidder Herichim. jung Sem Griebel. Jacob Etzman. Mount Pleasant. Abraham Minaig. Sem Schumacher. G. Langmeyer. Daniel Giddel. Abraham Giddel.	Ober's Schulhaus (Abraham Wagner) Daniel Biddel. Abi Hermer. John Jung. Henry Reyer Dffen. Mount Pleasant John Groll Diers Jacob Bucher. John Reyer. John Eroman. Samuel Giddel. Abraham Groll. Dffen. [Georg Giddel] Daniel Giddel. Abraham Giddel.	Bidder Herichim. Henry Herr. alt Sem Griebel Daniel Griebel. Mount Pleasant John Zug. Christian Lauffman Jacob Gieb Bidder Herichim jung Sem Griebel. Jacob Etzman. Mount Pleasant Abraham Minaig Sem Schumacher. G. Langmeyer. Daniel Giddel. Abraham Giddel.
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Meeting List of the White Oak Circuit of about 100 years ago, partly in Lancaster and partly in Lebanon county. The list covers a year, second two columns being practically a repetition of first two, some dates being left open. By such lists Brethren kept track of meetings when held in private homes. The places in marks of parenthesis were outside of White Oak territory, and were "for visits".

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tract was known as "Jacob's Plains." Meyer and his sons, Peter and Abraham, may have been members of the Brethren, as a Jacob Meyer was baptized in 1743, and a Peter Meyer, Oct. 20, 1782. Abraham Meyer, as well as his brother Peter, sold his share of his father's land to Hershey; and later we find an Abraham Meyer living above Mt. Zion, and on his land was erected the Brethren Moyer (Meyer) meeting house. So the Meyers may have been the first members about the present Cornwall meeting-house. (See History of the Royer Family by the Author, pp. 487-493.)

Again, a few miles east of Geib, at Buffalo Springs, lived Henry Weiss, who bought a farm here of 230 acres, Feb. 21, 1750. A Henry Weiss was baptized by the Brethren in 1742. Henry of Buffalo Springs was a non-associator, as were all the Brethren, being conscientiously opposed to bearing arms under any pretext. We believe that Weiss was a member of the Brethren. Charles Weiss, of Avon, a descendant, however, does not agree with our view.

We are informed by Eld. Martin Heisey, a descendant of John Geib through the son Jacob, that the Geibs invited the White Oak preachers of Lancaster county to come over and preach in their home. The home of Jacob Geib, a part of the property of his father, was a regular White Oak preaching place. Eld. Heisey says the preachers were Daniel Fretz (1776-1864), Jacob Haller (1778-1865), Philip Zeigler (1804-1874), and Abraham Gibbel (1790-1864), and likely others, as David Gerlach and Jacob Rider. But there was likely preaching here before these men were called to the ministry. John Geib already had three children when he bought the farm in 1792, and not unlikely he was a tenant on it, the property of his father-in-law earlier, so there was likely preaching in the old Geib home before 1800. If Christian Longenecker

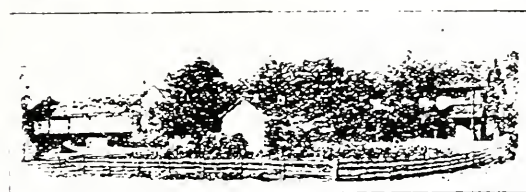
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(1731-1808) elder of White Oak Church, did not preach here, doubtless his co-laborer and successor, Eld. Johannes Zug (1731-1821) father of Eld. Abraham of Richland, did. Johannes Zug may have been the first minister of the Brethren to preach in the neighborhood of the Cornwall meeting-house.

Abraham Gibbel, called to the ministry in 1822, was an exceptionally able preacher, but unsteady in conduct. He especially made inroads into the Mennonite families of the community, viz: the Brubachers, Horsts, Heiseys, Smiths, and others. The wife of Dr. Benedict Bucher, of Rexmont, became a member.

At the home of Jacob Bucher, son of Dr. Benedict, at Isaac Brubaker's, and at Abraham Geib's meetings were held every twelve weeks, making meetings in the neighborhood every four weeks. Occasional meetings and love-feasts were held at other homes. This work in the neighborhood of Rexmont led to the building of the Cornwall meeting-house in 1871, a frame structure 40 ft. x 60 ft. In 1880, George Bucher started in this house the first Brethren Sunday School in Lebanon County.

But the White Oak Church was working in another part of her Lebanon field. At a somewhat early day, perhaps before Geib came to our county, George Royer settled a short distance below Achey's Corner, now Reistville. In 1830 his son Henry built the limestone house previously referred to as having nearly the whole of the second story in one room so that meetings could be held in it. George Royer formed a nucleus for a Brethren colony. His son Henry married a Widder of Middle Creek, and thus brought the Witters into our county. Catharine Widder (Witters), sister-in-law of Henry Pover, married Samuel Gible, of White Oak, and brought the Gibbles into our midst.



1. Nathan Gable Homestead near Schaefferstown. 2. Rev. Isaac Grubaker Farm near Reymont. 3. Geib (Smith) Homestead, north of Cornwall Meeting-house. 4. Yorty (Bomberger) Homestead, near Long's Meeting-house. 5. Samuel Gable Homestead near Mt. Pleasant.

Samuel Gible bought the farm on which the Heidelberg meeting-house was built, one-half mile east of Reistville. His home became a regular place of meeting. He gave the ground for the cemetery, and it became the Brethren's "city of the dead" many years before the meeting-house was erected. His will, dated Sept. 21, 1845, and probated Nov. 11, 1845, reads: "It is my will and I hereby direct and ordain that the graveyard or burying ground enclosed on my aforesaid plantation shall be enlarged and fenced up with good post and rail fence, and the content of the ground shall be four Rods wide northward and eight Rods long toward the East. The said grounds shall be fenced up or enclosed as aforesaid, and be kept in such order by the person or persons owning or occupying my said farm after my decease, and for all times and forever." The farm for many years has been occupied by Geibs. Samuel Gible was a deacon, and the father of George, who moved to Greble. Eld. D. W. Kurtz, D.D., president of McPherson College, McPherson, Kansas, is a descendant. Samuel's son, John, also a deacon, moved on a farm one mile northeast of Schaeffers-town, where his son Nathan now resides. John's home was a regular preaching place till the Heidelberg meeting-house was built in 1867. Nathan is a deacon, as is also his son John.

Eld. John Zug, son of Eld. Abraham, lived about a mile north of Reistville, the farm now the home of Lane Zug. John's home was a regular White Oak meeting place; nevertheless, we have seen, the Tulpehocken congregation, on its organization out of parts of Little Swatara and of Conestoga, elected him to the ministry. In the spring of 1844 the love-feast of the White Oak congregation was held at Jacob Bucher's, at Rexmont, the place where Rev. Templeman had lived, and the autumn

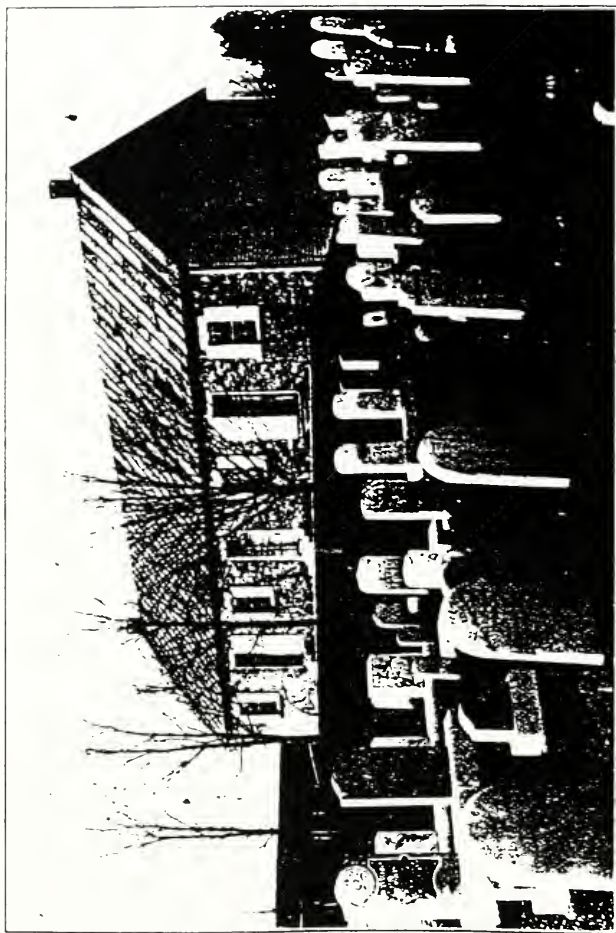
Following the members of White Oak north of the mountain decided to coalesce with the

Tulpehocken Congregation

This congregation now constituted the southeastern quarter of the county, bounded on the north by Little Swatara, on the west by Big Swatara, on the south by White Oak and Conestoga, the county line being the line, and on the east extending, but not seriously, into Berks county to the Maiden Creek congregation.

Eld. Jacob Pfautz, co-laborer with Eld. Abr. Zug, Eld. John Herr thinks, likely at first had the oversight of the new Tulpehocken congregation. Pfautz, however, resided in Lancaster county, while Eld. Bollinger was a member of the congregation. Pfautz had bought a farm a short distance south of Myerstown; where his son Moses lived, afterward the home of Eld. John Herr, and now of Rev. Benj. Zug. One of Pfautz's daughters married Jacob Herr, and became the mother of Eld. John; another married a Nissley and became the mother of Eld. Jacob Nissley, of Richland; while a son, Abraham Pfautz, moved to Little Swatara Congregation, where he became an elder, as is also now his son Jacob, of Freystown, Berks county. Eld. Daniel Bollinger, the resident elder, died Oct. 6, 1855, and is buried at Royer's meeting-house.

Our space is limited, and we cannot say much more about officials. For records of these you are referred to the History of the Brethren in E. Pa., pp. 457-461. A noteworthy election, however, was held May 29, 1847, when Daniel Royer and William Hertzler were called to the ministry. Daniel lived a short distance east of Richland, where his home was a regular preaching place. William's mother was Elizabeth Royer, daughter of Jacob, who gave the ground for the Royer meeting-house, in the basement of which William taught school. Daniel



Beth Beer Meeting House Near Rostville

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was the choice of the majority of the members; but William, the preference of the elder, whoever he was. Elders have considerable influence, and this one so manipulated matters that William also was installed. Daniel was neglected and gradually ceased to preach; but William, the boy preacher, was pushed forward. He improved, moved away into the Big Swatara Congregation, and ultimately became perhaps the most influential elder of his day in Eastern Pennsylvania.

John Zug became elder in charge of the congregation in 1861, and continued till his death, July 19, 1873. He was succeeded by Christian Bucher, who was ordained April 3, 1875. John Herr was ordained Dec. 20, 1897, and still has the oversight of the church, though he has associated with him as elders, William Oberholtzer and Jacob Nissley. The men called to the ministry by the Tulpehocken church are: Moses Pfautz, Sept., 1842; Daniel Royer and William Hertzler, May 29, 1847; Isaac Brubaker, Sept. 18, 1853; Christian Bucher, June 10, 1861; George Bucher, Sept. 21, 1865; John Herr, May 18, 1871; Abraham Myer, Apr. 3, 1875; Jacob Nissley, Apr. 30, 1881; Martin Heisey, Oct. 20, 1885; William H. Oberholtzer, Dec. 21, 1896; Joseph Wilhelm, Aug. 20, 1900; John L. Royer, Mar. 16, 1903; Benjamin Zug, Aug. 21, 1905; Michael Kurtz, Mar. 28, 1911. Seventeen in all, of whom six are now laboring for the congregation. In the 75 years of her history she has called twenty-one brethren into the deacon's office; and among the Brethren this office is for life, unless the person proves unworthy.

Of the principal families, Eld. John Herr found 23 Bollingers, 23 Klines, 24 Buchers, 25 Gibbles, 25 Weavers, 27 Brubachers, 32 Geibs, and 56 Royers.

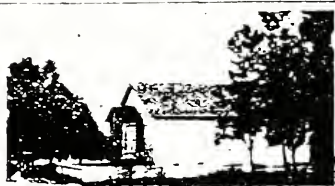
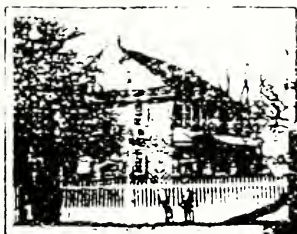
We have seen that the Conestoga Church erected a meeting-house in her Lebanon territory in 1840, since

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known as Royer's or Tulpehocken house. It was the first house of the kind erected by the Brethren in Lebanon county. The basement fitted up for school purposes reveals the attitude of the Brethren toward public education. Elder Herr says: "There are a few living yet, who remember that they went to school in the basement of Tulpehocken church, before the public schools were fully inaugurated. There were only two desks, one on either side; but they extended through the whole length of the building, and the teacher's desk was at the end. Among the teachers were: ——— Hoffman, Levi Carver, William Killinger, Jacob Kline, and William Hertzler. The school term was four months in the year during the winter. It was a subscription school, three cents a day, only when present, and the children came from near and far, and many are the fond recollections of the fathers and mothers yet living, of the school in the basement of the church. Even when public schools were fully established in the township, several terms were yet held in this church under the supervision of the school board, after which a suitable building was procured close by, and today there is a newly built school house only fifty feet from the church. Truly, church and school go together."

The Millbach house was built in 1850, brick, 36x46 ft.; capacity, 350; valuation, \$2,000. It was through the efforts of Seth Royer and Isaac Gobble, of near Kleinfeltersville, that the house was erected, both contributing liberally, Seth Royer giving more than one-third of the entire cost.

Richland Hall, in Richland, was converted, in 1870, into a house of worship; used conjointly by Lutheran, Reformed, and Brethren; Adam Schaeffer, father-in-law of E. W. Miller, Esq., being the Brethren trustee. In 1901 the Brethren acquired sole control. In 1913, this



John Royer (Ephraim Erbe) Homestead near Millbach. 2. Myers-town Meeting-house. 3. Richland Meeting-house. 4. Union Meeting-house above Mt. Zion. 5. Millbach Meeting-house.

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house was sold and an up-to-date brick, 50x80 ft., erected on Race street, which was dedicated Feb. 1, 1914.

The Heidelberg house, east of Reistville, was erected in 1867, stone, 50x70 ft., 12 ft. being added to the length in 1900; capacity, 900; valuation, \$4,500. This is a love-feast house, and really the main house of the congregation. Its erection practically brought to an end meetings in the private houses and love-feasts in barns. See the "Versammlungs Register der Brueder in der Tulpehocken Gemeinde," which was likely in use from the time of the building of the Millbach house till the Heidelberg house was completed. We have made reference to all meeting places on this register except J. Oberholtzer, the father of the late Abr. Oberholtzer, of Fourth and Cumberland streets. The Oberholtzer farm is the first one above Reistville, on the road to Lebanon, on the west side.

The Myerstown house, brick; capacity, 500; valuation, \$3,000; erected in 1876. This house has recently been remodeled.

Midway house, erected in 1895; frame, 50x80 ft.; love-feast house; cost, \$3,850.65. After the organization of the Midway congregation, seven years later, this became the main house of that congregation. This edifice was greatly improved with vestibules and interior decoration in 1916, at a cost of more than \$1,000. Special acknowledgments for these improvements are due Ephraim Zug, the Prescott merchant.

The Tulpehocken Congregation has two town centers which give promise for the future—Myerstown and Richland. Within Myerstown are 64 members, and Richland has about an equal number. Eld. John Herr and Eld. William Oberholtzer reside in Myerstown; and Eld. Jacob Nissley, in Richland. In both towns are active

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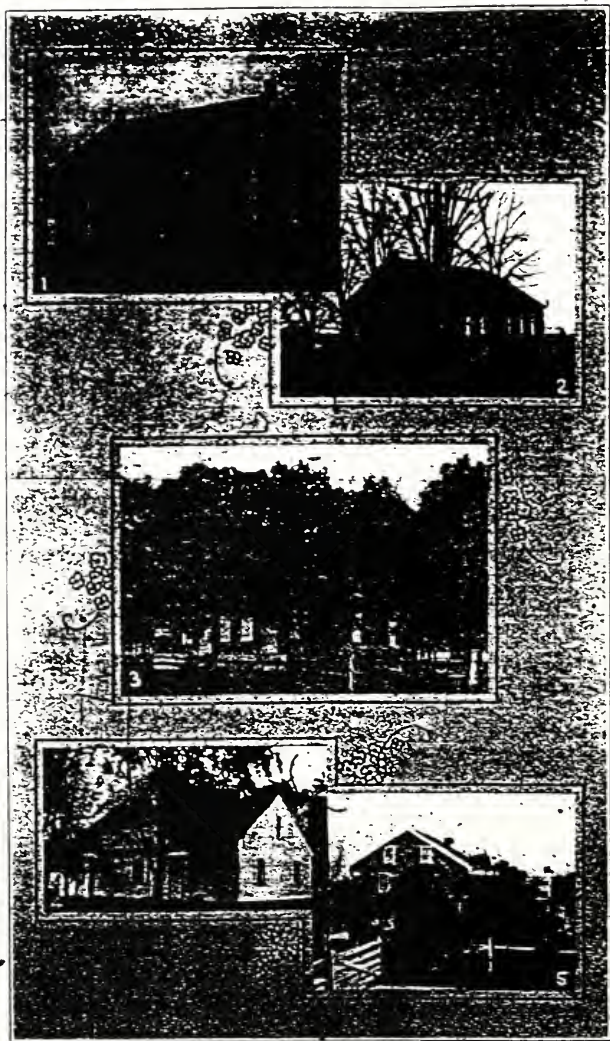
Sunday Schools, The Sunday School at Royer's, midway between the two places, having dissolved in 1911 in their favor. There are also Sunday Schools at Heidelberg and Millbach. The present membership is 367.

Midway Congregation

- This congregation was organized out of the western part of Tulpehocken Congregation, Mar. 24, 1902, with two meeting-houses, Cornwall and Midway; with a membership of 195; with ministers Christian Bucher, elder in charge, Martin Heisey and Joseph Wilhelm; with deacons Nathan Gibbs and Mohler Bucher. Those since called into the ministry: A. H. Brubacher, elected Mar. 28, 1904; A. Z. Brubacher, elected Aug. 30, 1909; Wm. A. Forry, elected Apr. 2, 1912; and Samuel Wenger, elected ——. J. G. Francis moved into Lebanon in 1901, having been chosen to the ministry in the Green Tree Congregation of Montgomery county, in 1895. He was the instigator of the Brethren College of E. Pa., located, in violation of some Brethren principles, at Elizabethtown, Lancaster county, and of the Brethren Historical Society. He hopes to build up in the city of Lebanon a church worthy of the Brethren.

The Brethren in Lebanon

The Brethren first began to work in the city of Lebanon on the invitation of Mr. Shomo, associated with Mr. Fauber, owner of the Union House of Prayer, on South Seventh Street, and of Mr. Young, publisher of a German paper in Lebanon. These two gentlemen attended services in the newly erected church at Cornwall, likely in 1871, and invited Christian Bucher to preach for them in Lebanon. He entered the open door. At first the preaching was irregular, and done only on invitation, but before long the Brethren rented the house for services every four weeks. This was about 1873. Bro.



1. Fredericksburg Meeting-house. 2. Hoke's Meeting-house, near Midway. 3. Long's (S. Annville) Meeting-house. 4. Cornwall Meeting-house. 5. Bucher Homestead near Rexmont.

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Bucher now began to send John Herr and George Bucher to fill appointments. William Oberholtzer likely preached the first sermon in English.

By permission of the church, the Brethren Sunday School of Lebanon opened, Easter Sunday, Apr. 2, 1899, in the house of Bro. Michael Zug, 138 Cumberland street, now the residence of the writer, in which are now the headquarters of the "First Church of the Brethren," under the care of the writer. The school was opened through the efforts of Mrs. Martha Eckert, daughter of Mr. Zug, who was anxious to have her sons attend a Brethren Sunday School. Mary F. Zug, now the wife of the writer, was made superintendent. The school opened at 10 A.M. by singing "Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove". The attendance was 20. We were married and moved to Reading. The Sunday School languished, and closed doors. After nearly two years we moved back to Lebanon; other members had also moved in. The school was reorganized Dec. 27, 1901, and the Union House of Prayer was secured for the services. In 1908 we arranged for a series of meetings in the house on South Ninth street, which Brethren now occupy. David Weaver, of Reading, did the preaching. Twenty-two applied for baptism, and the house was purchased before the close of the meetings, for \$2400. Last year it was enlarged and more fully equipped at a cost of \$2100. There are living in and around Lebanon about 120 members; total membership of congregation, 274. The promise of a Brethren Church, however, was made to Michael Zug, and the promise will be fulfilled by centralizing in the work now within his old home.

Big Swatara Church in Lebanon County

We have seen that from White Oak the Brethren moved westward, and that a church was organized as

Great Swatara. Morgan Edwards, writing in 1770, says: "This church is so distinguished from a river near to which the people dwell; and sometimes by the name of East Conewago, which is another river that runs through the neighborhood. The meetings are held chiefly at private houses in the township of Mount Joy, county of Lancaster, 20 miles from Lancaster, and 86 miles west by north from Philadelphia. Their preachers are Messrs. George Miller and Adam Hammacher, but not ordained. The families belonging to the congregation are about twenty, whereof 39 persons are baptized. This is their present state. They began in this manner: In the year 1752 (baptized in 1753), the said George Miller embraced the principles of the Baptists, and, soon after, his wife. Others moved from White Oak-land, and in the year 1756 united into a society, having Rev. Michael Pfautz to their assistance. He continued to visit them while he lived; and after him, others. They purpose soon to ordain Mr. Miller to be their minister." Eld. Michael Pfautz succeeded Michael Frantz as elder in charge of the church or churches in Lancaster county—from 1748 to 1769. Noteworthy among these early families of Big Swatara region were the Etters, Balsbaughs and Henrys. They moved on up into what is now Dauphin county. In the early days there were perhaps no Big Swatara members within the present bounds of Lebanon county. But it is in place to note that a Henry is now Judge in our county, and a Balsbaugh is Superintendent of our city schools.

George Miller looked after the Big Swatara Church after the death of Pfautz in 1769, but was not ordained till Aug. 15, 1780. He was succeeded in the oversight by Elder Valentine Balsbaugh, his son-in-law, who died in 1851, aged 96 years. Balsbaugh in turn was succeeded by his son-in-law, Lorenz Etter; and he by Elder

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Jacob Hollinger. All resided over in Dauphin county, but their flock strayed more or less across into Lebanon pastures.

In 1868 this large territory was divided into two congregations—the part north of the Swatara retaining the name Big Swatara, and the part south being named after the old stone Spring Creek meeting-house built in 1848, close to the present town of Hershey, the Spring Creek Congregation. John Etter, having been ordained, was chosen elder of Big Swatara. None of the members of Big Swatara Congregation are now in Lebanon county with the exception of the eighteen spoken of as worshipping in the Moonshine house. William Hertzler, previously mentioned in the record of the Tulpehocken Church, had moved to within a few miles north of Elizabethtown. He was ordained an elder and as an under shepherd to Jacob Hollinger, whose home was within the Spring Creek limits, looked after this congregation. As already stated, he became a very prominent elder of the Brethren Church. His son, Elder Samuel, was largely instrumental in locating the Brethren School at Elizabethtown.

The Spring Creek Congregation

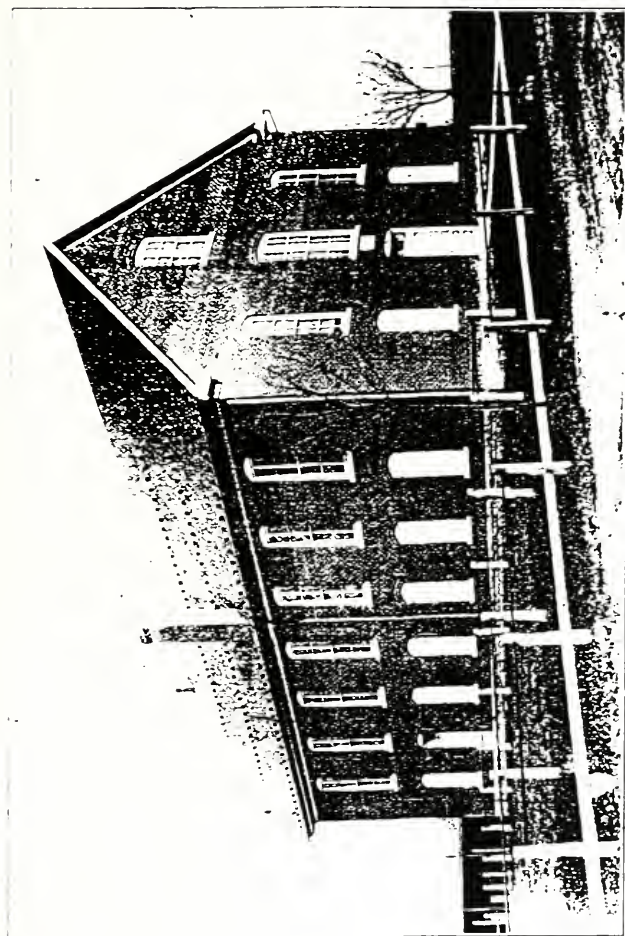
The Spring Creek Congregation has a great deal to do with Lebanon county. The congregation has centered largely in Palmyra. In 1893 William Hertzler wished to be relieved of his duties as elder. S. Becker and Jacob H. Longenecker were ordained. The latter was chosen as overseer, and has been the very efficient elder ever since, being one of the leading elders of the Church in Eastern Pennsylvania.

J. H. Longenecker, whose mother was a daughter of Eld. Jacob Hollinger, moved from the old Jacob Hollinger farm one mile south of Campbeltown, to a farm one mile north of Palmyra, in 1879. At this time there

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were very few members in the neighborhood. Kate Mark lived in Palmyra, and Martin Bowman, John Hoffer, John Baum, and John Zartman nearby. Mrs. Sarah Kieffer was the first member to reside in the town. She died Feb. 13, 1868. J. H. Longenecker first preached in the United Brethren church on the hill, perhaps as early as 1877, later in the Evangelical church in town. Rev. Amos H. Hottenstein held the first series of meetings in Palmyra in the home of Sister Kate Mark, now the wife of Joseph Gible. These meetings led to the building of a meeting-house in 1892, which is now being superseded by a large, up-to-date church edifice. A Sunday School was organized here May 20, 1894, with the following officers: Supt., M. R. Henry; Asst. Supt., A. S. Kreider, our present congressman; Sec., Samuel Kieffer; Asst. Sec., Anna Baum; Treas., Wm. Erb, now a county commissioner; Librarians, Samuel Stauffer and Lizzie Stophel. The superintendents since have been: Addison Hoffer, Samuel Kieffer, George Hoffer, Albert Carper, and Deacon Amos Longenecker, the present incumbent. In late years there have been several successful revivals, so that the membership within the town at present is 187.

One of the first, if not the first member residing near Annville was Daniel Struphar, who moved over from Schuylkill county and bought a farm north of Cold Spring school-house, Mar. 11, 1831. He is doubtless the Daniel "Strupenhauer" who was one of the founders of the Annville Academy in 1834. Being a member of the Big Swatara Church, he may have been the means of inducing Daniel Balsbaugh, also a member of the Big Swatara congregation, to take charge of the academy. Prof. Balsbaugh erected in 1859, the large three-story brick building. "The school," says Dr. Eglé, "was never in a more flourishing condition than at this period, when its very efficient head, Prof. Balsbaugh, was called away



Vandyke-McCune House

by death." Isaac Struphar, son of Daniel, was a deacon; and Isaac's son Daniel was a preacher. Rev. Daniel, however, fell away from the church. A daughter of Rev. Daniel married Samuel Baum, son of John before mentioned. Samuel, now occupying the Struphar homestead, is a grandson of Eld. Jacob Rider, of Lancaster county, who at times preached in the Struphar home.

The first minister to reside in the Lebanon county part of the Big Swatara Congregation, later Spring Creek, was Benjamin Kline, son of Eld. David, son of Eld. George, founder of Little Swatara Congregation. Benjamin, who was a brother-in-law of the older Daniel Struphar, moved from Berks county to Heilmandale in the spring of 1843. His home became a regular preaching place, the only one of Big Swatara in Lebanon county. Benjamin was later ordained an elder, and is said to have been an able speaker. He had a large family, a considerable part of it remaining in Berks county. Though some of his Lebanon county descendants have been lost to the church, yet they constitute a very considerable portion of the membership in and about Annville.

The Annville meeting-house, brick, of two stories, 48x78 ft., a love-feast house, was erected in 1906. Five brethren gave \$500 each—A. S. Kreider, J. Henry Gingrich, Harry G. Longenecker, Allen Bucher, and Jacob Heagy. A Sunday School was started in 1907, with Hon. A. S. Kreider as superintendent. His ideas ceased to coincide with the Brethren, and he joined the United Brethren. Had our present congressman placed in our city park, instead of a brass cannon, a statue of A. S. Kreider making a shoe, he would have done a thing in accord with the constructive patriotism of the Brethren. Mr. Kreider was succeeded by Bro. Cyrus Winters, the present in-

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cumbent. J. Henry Gingrich, as county commissioner, was most prominent in remodeling our court house.

A few miles south of Annville a Brethren center had been formed. In 1861 the heads of three families had been baptized—Jacob Yordy and wife, Elizabeth; Christian Dohner and wife, Catherine, daughter of Christian Long; and Joseph Smith and wife, Lydia. Yordy lived on the farm, about a mile west of Rocherty, afterward occupied by Elder Cyrus Bomberger, who married Annie Yordy, it now being the home of Yordy Bomberger. Dohner lived a short distance south, near the school house; and in the stream back of his house the baptism took place. The Smith farm adjoined the Yordy farm on the west. All afterward became preaching places. After the baptism at Dohner's, Christian Bucher, newly elected to the ministry, preached in the wood across the road. He has stated that at that time the country from Cornwall to Campbelltown was a wilderness. It is thought that Lydia Long Smith's mother, wife of Christian, was a member. If so, she was the first in the neighborhood.

Though these people lived close to Cornwall, yet they had to attend church council at Hanoverdale, Dauphin county, the Big Swatara Congregation not yet being divided. Five of the Smith children joined the Brethren—Christian on the homestead; and four daughters—Maria, married Jacob Long, near whose home the meeting-house was afterward erected, and is often called Long's; Sarah, married Martin Funk; Elizabeth, married John Kreider, nine of whose twelve children are active members of the church; and Barbara married Cyrus Brubacher, son of Eld. Isaac. Annie Yordy married Cyrus Bomberger, who later was called to the ministry, becoming a highly-esteemed elder.

These things led to the building of the South Ann-

ville or Long's meeting-house, about two miles south of Annville. On the marble stone up in the brick wall are the words: "Built by the German Baptist Church of Old Brethren 1869." The first preaching in the house was the funeral sermon of Lydia, oldest child of John Kreider, who died 15 minutes before the ushering in of the New Year of 1870. Two weeks to the day after this service, the church was dedicated.

We should yet say a word about the interest that grew up around Bellegrove. In this neighborhood lived John Ensminger, a minister, and wife, having previously lived south of Annville; Moses Heagy and wife, Ephraim Forney and wife, Jonas Hertzler and wife, who later moved to Kansas, and Abraham Moyer and wife. The Brethren owned a brick meeting-house north of Bellegrove, which had been bought by Mrs. Ephraim Forney and Mr. Isaac Struphar, and by them given to the Church. The interest here died out. The house was sold, and has since been torn down.

We have seen how Brethren interests were worked up in different parts of Spring Creek's Lebanon county field. The congregation was at work also across the Dauphin county line, but this is largely beyond us. In 1886 the big love-feast house at Spring Creek, the second house there, was erected, and this put an end to love-feasts in barns. The last barn love-feast was held at the home of Jacob Long, south of Annville. In 1911 a love-feast house was built at Bachmansville, making three such houses in the congregation, the one at Annville being the third. The Spring Creek congregation was now ripe for division into three.

In conclusion we have a word from Elder Longenecker: "During the nineteen years (from 1893-1912) there was slow but healthy growth of the church. Many of those who were received into fellowship and had their

Palmyra Meeting House



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Christian training here have moved away to other needs or active service, a few have gone to foreign needs.

On Saturday, Mar. 14, 1912, at a council in the Palmyra house, the Spring Creek congregation, numbering about 480 members, was divided into three bodies. The western part, retaining the old name of Spring Creek, the eastern taking the name of Annville, and the south-eastern part taking the name of Conewago.

"Spring Creek had two church houses—the large frame house for love feasts at Spring Creek and the frame house at Palmyra. They had one minister, Eld. J. H. Longenecker (living in Palmyra since 1898), and two deacons, George H. Hoffer and Andrew Clendenin. The membership was about 250. At a special council meeting held at the Spring Creek house, March 23, 1912, an organization was effected, and the old name of Spring Creek retained. J. H. Longenecker was chosen elder in charge; Wm. Glasmire, clerk; and J. H. Hoffer, treasurer. Frank S. Carper was called to the ministry, and Harrison Gibe and Walter B. Bashore to the office of deacon. Harrison Gibe has since been called to the ministry.

"The Annville Congregation had two houses, both brick, Annville and South Annville or Long's. Annville Congregation had a membership of 120, had four ministers—Eld. Alfred Gingrich, Eld. Henry Hollinger, Allen Bucher, and Jacob Gingrich, two deacons—Jacob Heagy and John Henry Gingrich. They were organized into a congregation March 25, 1912. Alfred Gingrich was chosen elder in charge; Jacob Heagy, secretary; John Henry Gingrich, treasurer. Deacons elected since are Cyrus Winters, Jr., Harry Gingrich, and Simeon Bucher, and Elmer Minnich has been called to the ministry.

"Conewago received the brick house, known as the Conewago house, near Beverly Station, and the Bach-

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mansville house, then in proces of erection. Samuel Witmer was chosen elder in charge. Only a few members, about ten in or about Lawn, are in Lebanon county."

In estimating the number of our members, we do not count unbaptized children, though we believe that little children are within the fold of Christ. We have seen that Sunday School work originated with us, and no church trains their children in a more Scriptural way. To tie a child to a creed it understands not, we believe, is subversive of religious liberty. Now without our children, of whom we have a moderate number, we have members in the Midway church, 274, and in Annville, 132—all within the county. Tulpehocken has 367 members with the exception of a few across the Berks county line all with us. The greater part of Spring Creek, 267 out of 315, are in Lebanon county. While Big Swatara has considerable territory within our limits, we have but 18 of her members. Of the Little Swatara we have 114 out of 380. Chickes, a Lancaster county congregation, has four of her members on this side of the line. Conewago, with 120 members, gives us 10. We have thus within the limits of Lebanon county 1186 baptized members. We have 14 meeting-houses.

Of the 8 ministers of Little Swatara, we have 4; of Big Swatara, none; of Chickes, none; of Spring Creek, 5; of Annville, 5; of Conewago, none; of Tulpehocken, 6; of Midway, 6. This makes a total of 26 Brethren ministers in Lebanon county. We are all text-makers, and eat of the corn only when actually treading it out, and very often not then.

In conclusion, we hope that all who name the name of Christ will keep His Commandments, and thus abide in His love, and that none will be condemned by His word, which will judge us in the last day.

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